

FITNESS

Cycling: An Alternative Road to Fitness

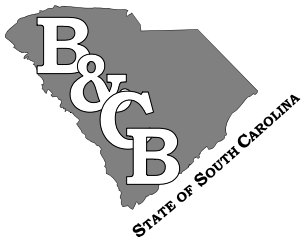
The excitement associated with bike riding can be so enticing. From elite athletes to the novice rider, people love riding their bikes. Cycling allows you to get physical activity and enjoy the outdoors. One of the overwhelming aspects of cycling is that it is a very equipment intensive sport and one of the most challenging aspects of bike riding can be selecting the right equipment. There are several types of bikes on the market ranging from hybrid bikes, cruisers, mountain bikes and road bikes.

The first step to begin your cycling adventure is to decide what type of riding you are going to do and then select the appropriate bike. Select a reputable bike shop that carries a variety of bikes, because if you visit a bike shop that carries only mountain bikes, they will recommend that you purchase a mountain bike. After selecting the style of bike that best serves your needs, you must ensure that it properly fits you. A bike that is the wrong size or poorly adjusted can increase your chances of developing an injury.

In addition to purchasing the proper bike, it is also important to purchase safety gear such as a bicycle helmet, elbow and wrist guards. Cycling shorts are highly recommended because they are padded for protection and won't bunch up or get caught on the saddle nose, flap in the wind or become excessively wet with sweat build-up.

After being equipped with the proper gear it is time to hit the road! Like other forms of exercise, cycling requires starting out slowly and building up endurance. Take time to warm-up and ease into your cycling routine. Increase your riding time approximately 5 to 10 percent each week. It is important to always check your bike before every session of cycling.

Remember that cycling not only provides a great fitness workout but it provides you the opportunity to enjoy the great outdoors! The State Health Plan Prevention Partners wants to encourage you to get out and get active this summer. Remember you hold the map to your health and cycling is only one road to achieving physical fitness!



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